

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT

SUBJECT: RAI-TV REFORM DECREE: MSI OBSTRUCTIONISM WINS THE
DAY

REF: (A) ROME 17339; (B) ROME 0983

SUMMARY: MSI-NATIONAL RIGHT OBSTRUCTIONISM AGAINST THE GOVERN-
MENT'S ATTEMPT TO REFORM THE STATE RADIO AND TELEVISION MONOP-
POLY BY DECREE LAW AS SUCCEEDED. A REGULAR BILL OMITTING THE
PROVISION WHICH PROMPTED MSI OBSTRUCTIONISM, AND WHICH NEED
NOT BE PASSED WITHIN THE 60-DAY TIME LIMIT FOR DECREES, HAS
BEEN INTRODUCED. WHILE EMBARRASSING, THE DEFEAT PRESENTS NO
IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF THE MORO GOVERNMENT.
END SUMMARY.

1. FACED WITH THE PROBABLE SUCCESS OF THE MSI-NATIONAL
RIGHT'S PARLIAMENTARY OBSTRUCTIONISM IN PREVENTING PASSAGE
WITHIN THE 60-DAY CONSTITUTIONAL TIME LIMIT OF A SECOND
DECREE LAW REFORMING THE STATE RADIO AND TELEVISION
MONOPOLY, THE PARTIES SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT HAVE INTRO-
DUCED A REGULAR BILL WHICH OF COURSE CAN BE CONSIDERED
WITHOUT A TIME LIMIT. THE BILL IS A REPLICA OF THE DECREE
EXCEPT FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE PROPOSED WATCHDOG COMMITTEE
FROM WHICH THE MSI HAD BEEN ARBITRARILY EXCLUDED, AND WHICH
HAD MOTIVATED THE LATTER'S OBSTRUCTIONISM.

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2. THESE DEVELOPMENTS REPRESENT A CLEAR VICTORY FOR THE MSI, AN EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE MORO GOVERNMENT, AND A DEFEAT FOR THE COALITION PARTIES, WHICH WERE DISCREETLY SUPPORTED BY THE COMMUNISTS. OF THE MAJORITY PARTIES, THE SOCIALISTS LOST THE MOST FACE, SINCE THEIR REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE OR CHANGE TACTICS UNTIL THE WEEKEND HAD HELD THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT TO A LOSING STRATEGY.

3. WHILE EMBARRASSING, THE ISSUE PRESENTS NO IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF THE MORO GOVERNMENT. (THE GOVERNMENT TOOK CARE TO AVOID THIS BY ASKING FOR AND WINNING A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE OVER A LIBERAL PARTY CHALLENGE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE STATE MONOPOLY.) HOWEVER, ITS REPERCUSSIONS PROBABLY INCLUDE A POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE BATTLE OVER CHANGES IN CHAMBER DEBATE PROCEDURES WHICH HAVE BEEN PROPOSED IN THE WAKE OF THE SUCCESSFUL FILIBUSTER, AND FURTHER CHANGES IN THE REFORM LAW ITSELF, AS WELL AS THE IMPACT OF THE BILL ON THE WORKLOAD OF OTHER PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS FOR SOME MONTHS TO COME.

4. COMMENT: THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, WON HANDILY, SERVED TO COVER UP A PARLIAMENTARY FIASCO WHICH HAD PUT THE SOLIDARITY OF THE COALITION PARTIES UNDER SEVERE STRAIN. THE NEED TO AVOID A SPLIT IN THE MAJORITY HAD MADE MORO A HOSTAGE TO THE INTRANSIGENT VIEWS OF THE SOCIALISTS, WHO WERE ADAMANT IN EXCLUDING THE MSI FROM RAI-TV'S GOVERNING BODIES, AND PREPARED TO CLASH WITH THE MSI ON THE ISSUE. THE SOCIALISTS HAD HOPED ALSO, BY USE OF OPEN CONFIDENCE VOTES, TO PREVENT AMENDMENTS TO THE DECREE BY DC ELEMENTS IN THE MAJORITY WHO AGREE WITH THE LIBERALS IN OPPOSING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE STATE MONOPOLY. AS A RESULT, THE GOVERNMENT ADOPTED LEGISLATIVE TACTICS OPEN TO QUESTION ON BOTH CONSTITUTIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY GROUNDS. PRIOR TO CONCEDING DEFEAT, THREE OF THE FOUR MAJORITY PARTIES

(DC, PSI, PRI) WITH THE INFORMAL SUPPORT OF THE PCI, MADE AN ILL-ADVISED ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE CHAMBER'S RULES OF ORDER DURING THE DEBATE, TO CHOK OFF FURTHER OBSTRUCTIONISM. (THE PSDI REFUSED TO GO ALONG.) THE MOVE WAS FRUSTRATED BY THE SOCIALIST PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER, SANDRO PERTINI, WHO THREATENED TO RESIGN IF THE MAJORITY PARTIES INSISTED. HE

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HAS HOWEVER AGREED TO A MEETING TO ACCEPT PROPOSALS FOR A MORE CALM AND ORDERLY CHANGE IN THE RULES, WHICH IF PRESSED COULD BALLOON INTO ANOTHER DIVISIVE ISSUE. VOLPE

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